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SIGMA XI QUARTERLY

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VOL. IV

DECEMBER, 1916

No. 4

THE NEW YORK CONVENTION

The regular annual convention of the Society of the Sigma Xi will be held at Columbia University, New York City, on Wednesday, December 27, 1916. The convention will meet in Room 301, School of Mines Building, at four o'clock for the transaction of such business as may come before it. At 6:30 on the same day the annual dinner of the Society will be held, the place to be announced on the general program of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Official notices will be posted at the headquarters of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and an opportunity will be given for those who wish to attend the dinner to secure tickets at the same place. It is urged that those who wish to attend the dinner signify their intention of doing so at the earliest possible moment so that proper arrangements may be made. Notice should be sent to Professor G. B. Pegram, Columbia University, New York City.

WORK BEFORE THE CONVENTION

All business which affects the whole body of the Society of the Sigma Xi is transacted at the Annual Convention. Some of the chapters apparently do not understand this because quite a number fail each year to send delegates and hence they are not represented in the transaction of business. This failure to be represented not only deprives them of a voice in the proceedings, but it sometimes prevents certain matters being carried through which the unrepresented chapters would like to have passed. It is, therefore, extremely important that every chapter send delegates to the annual meeting. The article in the Constitution which relates to the matter reads as follows:

"Delegates—

Section 2. (a) Each chapter in good standing shall be entitled to a representation of not more than three delegates at each convention.

(b) The delegates representing any chapter shall be chosen from its resident or non-resident members; except that in case any chapter shall be unable to send its own members, it may appoint members of any other chapter as its representatives."

These sections show that it is very easy for every chapter to be represented whether it can send its active members or not. It ought to be especially easy this year for every chapter to be represented because it is practically certain that in New York City there are graduates of every college which has a chapter of the Sigma Xi. It is to be earnestly hoped, therefore, that the chapters will take advantage of the provisions of the Constitution and appoint representatives who will express their views in regard to the subjects under discussion.

One important amendment to the Constitution is to be taken up and every chapter ought to have a definite opinion in regard to it. This amendment, which was printed in full in the last number of the *QUARTERLY*, has to do with the election of associate members. It will be recalled that two years ago an amendment to the Constitution was proposed which provided for associate membership in every chapter. This amendment failed because there was one vote less than the two-thirds necessary to pass a constitutional amendment. Most of the chapters which opposed the amendment were willing that associate members should be elected in any chapter which cared to have such a membership. In accordance with that feeling the present amendment to the Constitution has been proposed. Under this amendment it will be possible for any chapter to elect associate members if it wishes to do so. Associate membership has been urged because some chapters do not wish to elect undergraduates to full membership, deeming them not qualified under the provisions of the Constitution; but they do feel that some undergraduate students ought to have many of the privileges of membership because such membership would stimulate them toward a life of research and would enlist their interest not only in what this fraternity is doing but in research work in general. It is thought by others that associate membership cannot harm any chapter, if provided in the way mentioned in this amendment, because it is not obligatory and will only be assumed by such chapters as are cordially in sympathy with it.

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The chapters in the Society have been very much divided over the question of the election of undergraduates to membership in the Society. The proposed amendment seems to overcome most of the difficulties which have been hitherto encountered because it permits each chapter to decide this question for itself and does not force this new grade of membership upon any chapter. If it will reconcile the conflicting views, and if it will bring undergraduate students in closer touch with research work and with those who are actively engaged in it, it will undoubtedly prove beneficial to every chapter and to the whole membership of our Society.

CHARLES S. HOWE.

CREDENTIALS AND INSTRUCTIONS TO DELEGATES

Each chapter should provide its delegates with credentials duly signed by the proper chapter officers and these should be presented to the Committee on Credentials when the Convention assembles. Mail sent to the Society or any of its officers often goes astray or is delayed and both the Chapter and the delegate suffer. In previous years the Committee on Credentials has ruled for evident reasons that it must have credentials signed by chapter officers and could not act officially on statements of intention.

May I also call attention to the very evident fact that if the Convention is to do its full duty by the Society it must be composed of delegates familiar with the growth and purposes of the organization and free to form their own judgments on the basis of the discussion and in the best interests of the Society as a whole. Delegates not in contact with the actual work of Sigma Xi or bound by hard and fast instructions issued in advance of the Convention hamper its work if they do not entirely defeat the purpose of assembling. Can anyone question that the value of the annual meeting is the free exchange of views for the good of the order, and is it possible to attain that if the Chapter binds its delegates by absolute instructions?

I have taken the liberty of stating the problem thus frankly because in nearly every convention some delegate has recorded the fact that his vote was determined by chapter instructions and

really contrary to his own conception of the wisest policy for the Society in the light of the discussion. Is it not true that in a society devoted to the encouragement of research fixed and unchangeable opinions are somewhat incongruous?

HENRY B. WARD.

THE NEW CALENDAR

The attention of members is called to the calendar for the year 1917 printed on page 138 of this issue. It is the intention to make this a regular department of the *QUARTERLY* and to include all Sigma Xi functions that may be announced sufficiently in advance to be recorded therein.

The help of secretaries is solicited that the record may be made complete. No better evidence of the activity of our organization could be given. The calendar will also serve as a suggestion to members of the Society who may be visiting different institutions that such visits may be timed so as to give them the opportunity of meeting with the local chapter.